

ISLAM AN INTRODUCTION

SAYYID HAMID ALI

**Translated by
Abrar Mohsin**

FOREWORD

ISLAM AN INTRODUCTION is the version of Sayyid Hamid Ali's Urdu *Islam Ek Tarruf*.

This booklet presents a brief but comprehensive introduction of Islam. It is an endeavour to present Islam in its pristine purity, as borne out by the Holy Quran and sunnah i.e. sayings and acts of the Holy Prophet, and as understood by the worthy scholars of Islam. An attempt has been made to present Islam as a religion and also as a system of life.

While writing this booklet, the author has foremost in mind, not only the Muslims, but the non-Muslims-Hindus and christians, the atheists and the secular-minded. He has studied and acquired good knowledge of all other religions of the world, with an insight into atheism, communism and secularism. He also has fairly long experience of introducing Islam to non-Muslims. In writing the booklet, the author has kept in mind the psychology and the mythology believed in by his non-Muslim

readers while highlighting the virtues of Islam through a positive approach and comparative study.

It is hoped that both Muslim and non-Muslim brothers will find this booklet extremely useful and informative.

Publisher

THE UNIVERSE AND MAN

This seemingly boundless universe, stretching far beyond our imagination and consisting of billions upon trillions of stars, planets, solar systems and galaxies, so distant from us that their light travelling at a speed of 300,000 km per second takes millions of years to reach us, has not been there from eternity. It has come into existence some billion years ago. But it has not come into existence all by itself. That does not stand to reason; not is that possible. It has to have a creator. That is God. Every nook and corner of this entire universe is governed by identical laws of nature. Hence there are not many gods but only one God. It is neither a medley of subtleties nor a dream, a maya jal but a reality, solid and substantial, brought into existence by the All-Wise God, with some definite purpose and a set programme. Each atom of the universe bespeaks of order, discipline, organisation and balance — testifying to some Great Mind that has shaped it.

Man was not born as a consequence of some accident. It would be entirely unscientific, rather absurd, to presume so. Man is not an evolved species also. Man was created as Man, superior to all other creatures, to act as the vicegerent of God upon the earth. He was endowed not only with intelligent and rational thinking but also with freedom to act as he wills. He has been given the power to do good and evil deeds. This freedom makes him answerable to God and his fellow-creatures both for his deeds. His conscience is there to guide his steps and to make him discriminate between what is good and what is not. Man is not a born sinner, neither is he entirely sin-proof. He may commit sins and mistakes, which he does, but he has also the capability to repent and corrects himself.

All human beings, of all lands, of all hues and shades are His creation and His slaves. None of them is either a deity, God's incarnation or His progeny. All born of Adam and Eve, the common parents of all mankind, hence all of them enjoy an equal status in the brotherhood of mankind, irrespective of their colour, race, country, language, occupation and caste. There is no superiority of one over the other on ac-

count of race or occupation etc. The God-fearing who bear a good moral character, to whatever race they may belong, are closer to God and dearer to their fellow-beings. Class distinction and untouchability on the ground of one's birth is a social curse and a great crime against humanity. Every human being is clean by birth and there is none whose touch makes the other unclean. One may freely mix with and partake meals with all his fellowmen, irrespective of their caste, clan and religion, provided, only that the meal comprises such things as are not forbidden.

Woman is neither devil's agent, nor the root-cause of sin or despicable. She is man's counterpart and completely his equal in the eyes of God, equal in respect of accountability before Him and in the matter of punishment and reward. She is to be respected in no wise less than man. As mother she holds the highest position in human relationship and worthy of highest regard claiming the highest degree of service to herself.

GOD AND HIS ATTRIBUTES

Islamic conception of God is the most clear-cut, the most decent and the most convincing. There is absolutely no complexity in it. It can be freely weighed in the scales of logic, and its correctness can be tested on the touchstone of rational thinking. There is but one God and there is none like Him. Without any partner, He is the sole Creator of the Universe, the Absolute Master-Omnipotent. He is unique and alone in His attributes and suffers no partner. He is Omnipresent, eternal, without any beginning or an end. He is Immortal. He begets not, nor is He begotten, He has neither parents, nor wife, nor children; He is free from all demands of the flesh, and free of all faults and blemishes. Sleep does not overtake Him nor tiredness come to Him. There is nothing to make Him repent. He cannot be cheated or compelled to do anything. All His creatures depend on Him for sustenance and preservation while He Himself is above all desires and needs. God and the universe are not one and the same.

God is the Creator of the universe, which is not an incarnation of God. The universe has not come out of God, neither has God dissolved in it. God created it and sustains it. The creation of the universe and its sustenance and governance do not tire Him. In order to guide us, or to wash out our sins, or to punish the wicked, He does not have to come down in the world in the guise of man or animal. Neither has He ever sent His son on such a mission because He has no son. He is above all such things. There is none like Him and He is unlike everyone. He is His own likeness matchless. It is not possible to perceive Him with the frail physical eyes, but He is everywhere. All seeing, All-hearing and even the inner-most recesses of the heart are not hidden from Him. Even our thoughts and intentions are under His ever-watchful Eye. His knowledge encompasses every thing. He is Omniscient. He is closer to us than the jugular vein. He listens to our supplications and prayers and grants us favours even before they are asked for, without any intermediary. In our sufferings He alone is the help. His command is absolute over all things; He is the Great, the Almighty, while all others are absolutely powerless before Him. All virtues are for Him and He is the

fountain head of all beauty, perfection, power and greatness.

He is just, All-knowing and All-wise. His absolute and unshared rule prevails over every nook and corner of the universe and guides the heavenly bodies in their fixed orbits. The earth and everything on it are subservient to His commands. The organs of the human body dare not deviate from the set laws ordained by Him for their functioning. As a logical corollary to this, we should also not deviate from His set laws even in those spheres of life in which we have been given free will. His law is the only legitimate, true and correct law that can guarantee a happy and successful life. He is kind and Beneficent. His Mercy is All-pervading and countless are His Blessings ceaselessly showered upon mankind.

But His greatest blessing is the 'Deen', that He has sent for our guidance and success in this world and salvation in the hereafter. Those of his slaves that submit to His authority and sincerely follow the straight path shown by Him and remain steadfast in the face of the most trying odds and who are willing to sacrifice all their riches and even their lives, God helps them, supports them and blessed them with

His closeness. In the hereafter His choicest blessings will be showered on them and they will be rewarded handsomely. He alone rules this world and is the Master of the hereafter. Nobody can do us an iota of harm if He protects us and none can come to our rescue should His protection be withdrawn. Man comes into this world only when so ordained by Him and depends solely on Him for subsistence. He alone is the Author of the destinies of the individuals as well as of the nations; He alone plans the rise and fall of the nations. He ordains the nations to the abyss of doom and causes the creatures to die. After death, Man returns to Him. During and after the corporal existence, it is impossible to slip out of His domain and control.

THE PROPHET

By misusing his free will man is prone to go off the Right Path, which amounts to rebellion against God. There is one, and only one correct path for man that ensures happiness and success for him in this earthly life and in the hereafter-total and unconditional submission to the Will of God. The entire universe obeys His will and dare not transgress the laws set down by Him. Since man is a part and parcel of the universe, it would be unwise for him to act otherwise than in strict adherence to the Divine laws. In this evolving universe the best course for man for his own evolution is to be in harmony with and by following the laws made by the Creator of universe. Attitude of arrogance and rebellion against God results only in misery and ruination in this life and in the hereafter as well. What is essential for the evolution of the individual is equally essential for the evolution of the human society. The evolution of mankind needs the Divine Law that establishes strict equality among all human beings-black and

white, high and low, rich and poor, artisans, capitalists, workmen, whether from the East or the West. It needs a law that ensures justice for all; that provides equal opportunities of making progress to everyone; that offers the most perfect solution to all problems; that guarantees success in this life and happiness and salvation in the hereafter. Such a law is beyond Man's ability to forge. He, on his own never been able to make such a law and can never do so. He is utterly devoid of the ability, prudence and vision to make such a law. Man is incapable of it. In fact, it is just not his business, nor is he capable of making laws for himself. God alone is the Maker of such laws-God-Who is the Maker and Administrator of the universe, Who is aware of all the mysteries of the universe and is the Creator of humankind, Who has the knowledge of the causes of the rise and fall, success and failures of the nations, Who is the fountainhead of all wisdom and knowledge, who is free from injustice and partiality, who is justice itself and treats all His creatures without taking sides. All are His creatures and He is kind and Merciful to all. Who but He, is worthy of giving Man such a law that will govern his life? It is absurd to presume that after creating Man

God left him groping in the dark for this law. His concern about Man's happiness and welfare in the two worlds is unfathomable. All Just, Beneficent and Merciful, All wise and All-Knowing as He is, it is but natural and understandable that He must have made arrangement to fulfil this basic and most important need of mankind which He and He alone is capable of doing.

Fact is that God has really made arrangement to fulfil this big need of man. In all ages and nations God chose such men who possessed unusually strong intellect and character. Through the agency of His angels they were made acquainted with the law (the will) of God and were entrusted with the great responsibility of passing it on to mankind-to the ignorant, the wicked, the evil, and to ceaselessly strive to bring them back to the path of righteousness, truth and virtue. This law or 'Deen' tells Man in unambiguous terms-how to worship and obey Him; what are the things that are permissible and what are to be avoided, what is the pattern of life that can ensure His pleasure. This 'Deen' guides Man and lays down laws that do not leave him unguided and unattended in any sphere of life whatsoever-moral, economic, social,

political, etc, the most comprehensive and perfect code of life on which alone depends all wordly success and salvation in the hereafter.

These prophets are not God, or His sons, or His incarnation, neither they have a share in godhood. They are just human beings, depending on Him for all things, like all the rest of their fellowmen. They are pious men, leading chaste and virtuous life. God keeps them away from sins. They are exemplary humans, ideal followers of His 'deen'. In addition to the Divine Book of Guidance revealed upon them, their own life too provides the best model for mankind to emulate. They are the torch-bearers and light-houses, amidst the encircling gloom.

These holy men of God convey the Divine Message and God's injunctions and commands to mankind, in full and without any alteration or addition. They were hooted, laughed at, mocked, jeered, harassed, intimidated, pelted with stones, subjected to the worst physical and mental tortures, exiled and even threatened to be assassinated and in fact killed by the misguided ones of their time. But nothing could make them abandon or even waver in

the slightest in their mission. They most graciously forgave their foes and, in fact, were so concerned about them that they tearfully prayed to God to guide them to the Right path. They did not hanker after name, fame, riches or wordly honours. They were actuated by the sole aim of establishing God's Rule upon this earth and their hearts were full of the milk of kindness and love for mankind. The singular mission of their lives was total submission to His will and inviting their fellowmen to the Right path. All the prophets most faithfully devoted their lives to this mission, suffered untold hardships and even sacrificed their lives for the noble cause.

According to Islam, the first man, Adam, was also the first prophet, followed by many thousands of them in different times and lands, the last of them being Prophet Mohammad (P.U.H). All of them are vital links of the Divine chain. It is obligatory on us to have absolute faith in all the prophets and the books revealed unto them. Rejecting any one of them would amount to the rejection of all of them and rejecting any one Divine Book tantamounts to rejecting all Books.

As these prophets were sent to dif-

ferent nations in different times, and under different conditions, the laws introduced by them were slightly different in some details, but the fundamental message of all of them was one and the same, i.e. Obey none but God, none is to be worshipped but He.

As the prophets conveyed to mankind God's Message, therefore, by obeying His prophets we, in fact, obey God. In the obedience to the prophets lies the obedience to God. Which guarantees success in this world and in the hereafter as well. Rebellion against the prophets is rebellion against God which leads to and results in ruination in this world and in the hereafter.

At the time of the advent of Prophet Mohammad (P.U.H) all the earlier revealed Books i.e. the Towrah, the Zuboor, the Injeel (Bible) etc, had interpolated. Even to this day none of these is preserved in its original text, but the Holy Quran. Due to man-made interpolation, truth and untruth had been inter-mixed, man-made laws had made inroads into Divine laws and the Right path to salvation had been concealed and obscured in the undergrowth of confusion and man-devised superstitious beliefs, practices and rituals. The Holy Quran the latest of all revealed Books was revealed

unto Prophet Mōhammad (P.U.H). It purged the Divine Message, earlier sent through earlier prophets, of all interpolations, separated truth from falsehood, pointed out man's exact relationship with God, directed Man to the Right Path of salvation, presented the Divine law in a clear-cut and unambiguous form and made it final and uptodate for the guidance of mankind for as long as there is life upon this earth. Prophet Mohammad, though born at Makkah, was sent as a guide for all mankind. The Message that he brought was not only for the desert-dwellers of Arabia but for the entire human-race and for all times. Prophet Muhammad is thus the last prophet for the whole of mankind.

Now let us try to appreciate the relevance and special significance of Prophet Muhammad and the 'deen' presented and preached by him. This can done from six angles.

The Bible, the Quran and the history of religions bear testimony to the fact that all the other prophets of yore who came prior to Prophet Muhammad (P.U.H.) brought guidance for some particular nation and for a particular age. The world needed not a national prophet but one who could guide

the whole mankind for all times to come. Prophet Muhammad (P.U.H.) being the last of the prophets, brought the Message (the Quran) that addresses all the nations inhabiting all the regions of this planet. This message is complete, perfect, and final as no other Message will ever in future be sent by the Creator and no Messenger will come after Prophet Mohammad. No other revealed Book but the Quran has preserved its original text and as such we have to depend on the Quran alone for the Divine guidance. The life of prophet Mohammad (P.U.H.) is, in a way, the Quran personified, the Quran translated into human life. If there is anything in the Quran that we find difficult to understand we can always turn to the life of the Holy Prophet which is the most truthful interpretation of the Quranic teachings rendered into life. His life can be most authentic and dependable guide as he alone among all the earlier prophets, was born and lived in the full light of history. Hence, for seeking Divine Guidance one has but to turn to Quran and Prophet Muhammad (P.U.H.).

The Holy Prophet, under the guidance of God, performed the miraculous task of transforming a nation of the uncivilised, the

corrupt and the wicked into one which lit up blazing lamps of awakening, virtue, good and valour, in the far corners of the world. His is the only eminently successful endeavour at reforming a degenerated people and elevating them to dazzling heights is the only one, the record of which in complete detail is preserved in the pages of history. Thus it can serve as a model to re-construct and re-shape the ailing human society of the modern times too.

The Holy Prophet, in order to establish God's 'deen' brought about a multi-dimensional social revolution and did set up an ideal State that was further expanded and strengthened by his esteemed successors. Plato's 'Republic' could never come out of the pages of his book but the ideal state set up by the Holy Prophet was a solid historical reality—a state, founded on the noble principles of humanity, universality and morality. We can gainfully draw on this model for the much-need social revolution and for the setting up of an ideal state as well.

Lastly, Islam provides the complete and best solutions to all the complex problems confounding the humanity today, in solving which all existing religions and

isms have failed. No other existing system can claim to have the strength and potentiality to offer solution to all the problems confronting the mankind.

Therein lies the relevance and importance of Prophet Mohammad (P.U.H.) in the modern times.

THE HEREAFTER

Virtue and vice, justice and injustice, kindness and cruelty, modesty and shamelessness, obedience to God and rebellion against Him cannot be alike and their consequences are bound to be different. One should yield good results and the other, bad. All goodness deserves rewards and all evils, punishment. But, at times, we see good going unrewarded and evil remaining unpunished. At times we even notice just the reverse of it that the pious and upright have to undergo suffering after suffering whereas the wicked and sinful seemingly enjoy all the comforts of life. We also see the weak moaning and groaning under the tyranny of the strong everywhere. This is the stark reality despite all the tall claims of the human society's giant strides on the path of evolution and progress.

Why is it so and should it then be surmised that ours is a topsy turvy world, without any sensible ruler to look after its

affairs and to administer justice? Is it true that 'God's in His heaven and all's right with the world? The answer is "No". Each atom in this universe bespeaks of some definite purpose, set plan, wonderful organisation and these things, in turn, vouchsafe for and bear testimony to some Great Mind behind it. God, the Absolute Monarch of the universe, is neither unjust nor are His hands tied in any way whatsoever. Then what is the reason for such 'illogical and unjust' instances?

In fact, this world is the 'abode of action' and 'abode of test'-a testing ground, to be more exact. We are free to act as we like, good or bad, just or unjust, in any way we like. There is also freedom to obey or disobey God. This world is the place where we sow the seeds of our deeds- and the harvest is to be reaped, in the world-to-come, or the Hereafter. In this world there is neither reward nor punishment. After death, all human beings will be given life which will be eternal in order that full reward for the good deeds and full punishment for the evil deeds should be given without 'death' cutting them short. It is then that God will hold His court and each one of us will have to account for our deeds and misdeeds,

without anyone to plead for, or to intercede. Complete record of everybody's life will be with God and his fellow human beings, the angels, even the organs of one's own body will testify to what all one had done during the span of life in the world. Nothing can be hidden from Him who can read even our innermost thoughts, motives and intentions. No one will be able to get away with his sins. There is no escaping His judgement, and He Judges most judiciously and most justly. Bountiful and eternal will be the blessings for the God-fearing and the virtuous, such as human imagination is unable to envision. They will enjoy a life of eternal bliss that knows no sorrow, sickness or aging. The greatest reward will be that they be blessed with the great honour of seeing their Creator and conversing with Him. Those who rebelled against Him or assigned partners to His Godhood or denied Him will be condemned to eternal punishment, disgrace and suffering. Those of the virtuous ones that committed some acts of sin and could not repent and ask for His forgiveness, will be allowed into Heaven after having been suitably punished for their misdeeds.

· This life is only a passing phase and

we should aim at achieving success and happiness in the hereafter for which we should ceaselessly strive in this world and should constantly keep in mind that failure to achieve salvation in the hereafter is the most disastrous failure which we should fear most and strive against.

THE TENETS OF ISLAM

Faith in God being one, in His Prophets and in the Hereafter are the basic tenets and the bedrock of Islam. After this there are five things that serve as pillars to support the edifice of Islam viz, (1) bearing testimony to and a conscious and sincere acceptance of God being one and all prophets being the Messengers of God, (2) establishment of Salaat (namaaz), (3) regular payment of Zakaat, (4) fasting in the month of Ramadhan, and (5) pilgrimage to Kaaba (Haj) if one's resources allow.

Belief in God being one and in His Prophets which is the essence of the *Kalima-e-Tayyeba*, endows one with an iron will and firm determination to obey God and His prophets and brings about a pious revolution in one's life. This Faith is foremost among the tenets of Islam and holds precedence even over Slaa (namaaz).

The aim of establishing Salaat (namaaz) is to make one remember the Creator with absolute sincerity and faith,

and make one bow down in all humility with body and soul in total submission to His Authority and will. This is to be performed five times in a day. The advantages of namaaz are manifold. It is the most effective means of making one sincere and truthful believer in God and keeping one from disobeying the Creator, thus making him an exemplary human being. In order to pay obeisance to and establish rapport with God one needs no intermediary (that is why there is no room for priesthood in Islam). The prophet has elaborately shown and explained to us how we can directly approach God and invoke His blessings through the medium of namaaz. Collective offering of namaaz (congregational prayers) creates collectivism and promotes discipline and fraternal feelings. There is no special place for offering namaaz. Any place—a field, a house, a garden, a platform—provided it is clean can be chosen for offering namaaz. Mosques are preferred because of their serene and pious atmosphere and because visiting mosque and offering prayers therein develops collectivism and inculcate orderliness. Women, for whom namaaz is equally obligatory, should preferably offer their

prayers inside their homes in order to create an atmosphere of piety therein.

A mosque is nobody's personal property, it belongs to everyone, wherein all, rich and poor, mighty and humble, black, brown and white, stand shoulder to shoulder with one another, forgetting all differences on account of caste, colour, race or riches, before their common Master. The congregation is led by the most virtuous among those present, be he a pauper or slave and whatever his caste or vocation. A mosque is, in this way, the demolisher of worldly distinctions in human society and the practice ground for promoting and establishing the basic equality and fraternity among all the children of the common parents- Adam and Eve. All of them pray in a common language, Arabic, and face the Kaaba, a symbol of their common objective, common goal, common focus of devotion, standing there from many thousand years, telling us, in mute language, that all humans are links of the one chain of humanity, that all are equal in the eyes of God, that we should raise ourselves above petty differences, feuds, prejudices, jealousies, pride and vanity, and become one in establishing His Rule upon the earth.

The third pillar is zakaat. Every affluent man or woman, having money in cash or kind (over $7\frac{1}{2}$ tolas i.e. around 77 grams of gold or over $25\frac{1}{2}$ tolas i.e. around 525 grams of silver or trading goods equal to its value) should give away $2\frac{1}{2}$ Per cent of it once a year for philanthropic purposes. The amount of zakaat should be placed in a common pool and then spent in a planned manner to emilliorate the condition of the poor and the needy. This is the obligatory minimum. The purpose is to lessen the lure for riches and to inculcate the tendency of spending wealth for the cause of God and for eliminating the sufferings of fellow human beings in order to win God's pleasure.

Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam. During the month of Ramadhan, all adult Muslim men and women are enjoined to keep away from water, food and sex from dawn to dusk. Fasting is an exercise in piety, in keeping away from all temptations, in strengthening our will-power and in experiencing the pangs of hunger of the poor. During Ramadhan, with fasting, more offering of non-obligatory prayers, more and more recitation of the Quran and helping the poor generously there is an atmosphere

of piety and restraint all around.

Haj i.e. pilgrimage to Makkah, at least once in life-time, is obligatory on all Muslims provided they have sufficient means for it. Haj unites Muslim of all hues and colours, from all over the world, every year at one place. It provides a beautiful opportunity for the Muslims to promote universal brotherhood, an occasion when they can come closer to one another by understanding their problems and rendering help to their brethren.

God is not in need of any one of these five things nor any of these add to His Glory. They are meant for the good of mankind, to make us better human beings in order to set up a society free from all evils and to create an atmosphere wherein all will do good deeds and the happy crop whereof may be harvested in the Hereafter. These five things will lead us from pleasure to pleasure, from glory to glory, in this world and in the world to come.

THE ETHICAL SET-UP OF ISLAM

Truthfulness, honesty, justice, kindness, compassion, being true to promises, the spirit of forgiveness, honest earnings, keeping away from forbidden things, identical inner and outer self and good moral conduct can make an ideal individual and such individuals constitute an ideal society. Contrarily falsehood, dishonesty, breaking promises, cruelty, unfair ways of earning, cheating, shamelessness, hypocrisy and bad morals will make wicked and diabolical individuals, who, in turn, will create a satanic society.

In Islam, good morals and character are of prime importance. The prophet (P.H.M.) is reported to have declared, "I have been sent for the completion and perfection of high morals". The Holy prophet's life itself was a personification of, and a living testimony to the supreme in good morals and he built up a society, a social order that was exemplary and of a very superior type. Whereas Faith is the

bedrock of the deen, it remains hollow in the absence of good morals without which one cannot win God's pleasure. Good deeds and good morals are vital for a virtuous life. The Holy prophet explicitly warned that an amoral way of life shall invite God's wrath. The Holy prophet said that four things make one hypocrite-telling lies, breaking promises, betraying trusts and being unfair, unjust and quarrelsome in dealings. The Holy Prophet further said truthfulness is the pathway to virtue which in turn leads to Heaven, therefore, be truthful and shun lies as lie leads to vices and disobedience of God and makes one land in the fire of Hell. Modesty, the prophet said is an integral part of Faith and that the body fed on dishonest earnings is fuel for the fire of Hell.

The Islamic order is wholly based on ethical values. The foundation on which this edifice stands, in the words of the Quran, is: Surely God enjoins upon you to be just and equitable, to be fair in your dealings, to be helpful to your kith and kin and forbids you from shameful acts, vice, cruelty and transgression."

Islam does not have different standards of moral behaviour for those who are

related to us and those who are not. To stick to the path of justice and fair-play in all matters and in all situations is extremely difficult, but Islam ordains strict justice even while dealing with an enemy. According to Islam the main aim of the advent of the Prophets and the holy revelations was to establish justice upon the earth. The chief mission of a Muslim's life is to bear testimony to the Truth, to establish justice, to enjoin good and to forbid evil. The sole objective of an Islamic state is to make people surrender to the will of God, to extend help to the poor, to promote virtues and eradicate evils. Islam subserves all the activities of human life, including political and economic, to certain moral principle and makes it a duty of individuals, the society and the state to stand against evil, injustice and oppression, to establish justice and to promote moral values. In fact the whole Islamic system of life is based wholly, from top to bottom, on sublime moral principles and Muslims have been enjoined upon to establish this system in the world.

ISLAMIC SOCIAL ORDER

The human race consists of males and females. Like other animate beings, mankind has also been created in pairs. Marital relations between man and women are not taboo. There is nothing wrong in it and it need not at all be avoided. In fact the relationship between the two is essential for the procreation of the human race, for mutual love and affection, for proper care and upbringing of children, for protecting the moral character of both and for serving the cause of God. Establishing marital relationship is not viewed by Islam as a mere mundane affair but as a religious obligation as well, an act liable for reward from God. Marital relationship brings family into existence which is the basic unit of the Islamic society leading to the Islamic State.

Marriage is solemnised with the free consent of the man and the woman and with the willing cooperation of the families of both. With the exception of a few close relations that have been specified all other

males and females can enter into marriage with one another. Marriage with non-believers and polytheists is forbidden. However, a Muslim male may wed Jewish and Christian woman but it is not deemed desirable. Man can have, if he feels the need, more than one wife, upto four at a time provided he has the means to support them and the children born of them, and is further capable of treating them with strict equality, otherwise he should restrict himself to one only. This provision, as distinct from injunction, is to meet certain situations, for example in the case of the wife being barren or becoming bed-ridden due to some ailment or accident, or when women come to outnumber men (like in case of wars) or for the protection and care of orphans. It is to be noted that polygamy has never been, nor can ever be, a rule. It has always been and shall always be an exception. This for obvious reasons as females have never been so much in excess to males that each male could have more than one wife, nor is every male endowed with sufficient means to maintain more than one wife and the offsprings nor is every male capable of treating all the wives with that degree of equality which is

desired by Islam. It is for these reasons that despite clear permission for it, incidences of polygamous marriage among Muslims are negligibly few. And it is because of this provision being there that extra-marital sex, even if by consent of both the parties, is held as a major sin in Islam liable for severe punishment.

For the formation of a clean and healthy society two different spheres of activity have been allocated to men and women. Women has been entrusted with the noble responsibility of looking after the household and the rearing and upbringing of children to make them good and worthy members of the society and good and worthy citizens of the state. She is also to be a good companion to her husband so that both may get solace in each other's company.

Man is assigned the task of maintaining his wife and children and to contribute to the proper care and upbringing of children.

Free mixing of the two sexes generates many evils. Segregation is, therefore, essential to safeguard the morality of the society.

In case husband and wife are unable to pull on together and efforts at improving the situation fail, then as the last resort, they can separate either through divorce or khula (judicial separation) after which both are free to remarry elsewhere, at will. A widow is not looked down upon but she has every right of a respectable life and to remarry. In fact, her remarriage is treated as an act of virtue deserving reward. All the members of a family should be closely knit together and an atmosphere of love, cooperation, understanding should prevail. It is for the man to provide for the sustenance of his family, to look after it and be kind forbearing in the family-life, whereas it is for the wife to abide by his just wishes and render her affectionate cooperation to him.

After obedience to God and His prophet comes obedience to one's parents who should be obeyed in all matters except where their wishes conflict with the command of God. Bringing up children is the parents' responsibility. We have responsibility towards all our kith and kin. To share others' sorrows and to render them all assistance are regarded as important duties in Islam. All Muslims are brothers

unto one another A true Muslim is one whose tongue and hands do not hurt and harm fellow Muslims. Talking ill of Muslims amounts to disobeying God and fighting unjustly with a Muslim is as bad as the rejection of God.

A true Muslim is one who likes for others what he would like for himself. A neighbour deserves justice and fair and affectionate treatment, irrespective of his religion. He who misbehaves with, and ill-treats his neighbour is deficient in Iman (faith). All humans, being the progeny of Adam and Eve, are members of one family and brothers unto one another. It is, therefore, the moral responsibility of every Muslim to share the hardships of and to be helpful to his fellow human beings. Even the servants and other subordinates deserve fair treatment. Life and property of others are to be respected and an encroachment upon them is an awful sin deserving punishment. Suicide is an unpardonable crime. It is the duty of the Islamic society and the State to safeguard the right of those who are weak and to protect them against the exploitation by this, mighty to curb evil and oppression and to promote good and maintain justice.

In the final analysis, the establishing of justice and promotion of virtues and true humanism depend on the complete enforcement of the true deen and on the setting up of a truly-Islamic State.

THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF ISLAM

The overlord of all the wealth and resources is neither the capitalist, nor the labour, nor the individual, nor the State, nor a Particular class nor the mankind as a whole. God is the Creator of the universe, the earth and all the riches and resources it contains. Logically, therefore, to Him alone belongs everything that exists. The ownership of man over things is temporary, granted to him by the Real Owner. Man is the vicegerant of God upon the earth and a mere trustee of His created things. He is directly accountable to God for the acquisition and the use of the wealth. God is the universal provider, but it is the religious obligation of man to strive, within the bounds of religion and morality, for the acquisition of means of sustenance which should not be in contravention of religious injunctions and norms of morality, harmful to the interests of the society or based on cheating, dishonesty and fraud. All such means of earning livelihood are prohibited.

Greed, avariciousness, gambling, speculation, lottery, hoarding, black-marketing, profiteering, giving and taking interest, all are economic offences. Use of and trading in intoxicants is forbidden. A body nourished on food earned through unlawful means is fit for hell-fire. Extravagance and any expenditure on items of pomp and show is also forbidden. After spending on self and the family within reasonable limits, the excess amount from out of one's earnings should be spent on the propagation of Islam and to help the poor and on other philanthropic objects.

It is the duty of an Islamic society and of an Islamic State that it should organise the collection of zakaat and utilise it for the purpose of eliminating the sufferings of the have-nots and to help the poor and the need by all other possible means. An Islamic society and an Islamic State is further under obligation to see to it that no one suffers the pangs of hunger and that every one has a roof over his head, receives proper education and medical attention when needed as each member of the society and the citizen of a State has inherent right to enjoy these amenities. The Islamic principle is that a labourer should be paid the

due wages before the sweat on his brow dries up and that he should not be burdened with unreasonable load or work. An Islamic State has to see that wealth does not concentrate in the hands of only a few and that monopolies are done away with. The State can exercise reasonable control over the production and expenditure of wealth in the interest of the society. Islam brooks neither the individual's capitalism nor that of the State. Both are highly reprehensible.

If it becomes imperative in the interest of the society, at large the State may nationalise certain trades and industries but for the State to itself become the greatest capitalist by taking all trades and industries, all resources, the press and the judiciary etc, under its control in the name of the welfare of the labour class, is a great wrong. It destroys the individual's personality and under such a system the whole country become virtually a big concentration camp.

On a person's death his estate should not be inherited by one single person but be shared by different close relatives so that there is no concentration of wealth. Beggary has to be eliminated and all the needy are to be helped either gratis or through

loans without interest. All loan transactions should be reduced to writing and attested by witnesses to avoid disputes in the future. Any one called as a witness in any dispute should give evidence truthfully with the fear of God even if his testimony is to go against his own self, his parents, his kith and kin or against his people and his country.

Loan can be obtained through hypothecation but the person advancing such loan is forbidden by Islam to derive any benefit from the thing hypothecated as, according to Islam, deriving such benefit in essence amounts to charging interest on the amount loaned.

POLITICAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

Overlordship is for God alone. Neither kings, nor dictators, nor parties, nor even the entire mankind can have this prerogative. Overlordship of the world can only be of its Creator. Man is not the lord but the vicegerent of God whose law makes the earth go round and guides the heavenly bodies in their course. His law is the only real law that He has sent through the agency of His prophets. This law is for the entire human race guaranteeing its welfare and solution to all its problems. We have but to follow those laws and enforce them. The faithful, the loyal and the virtuous are allowed to make subsidiary laws as needed but within the permissible limits and drawing light from His ordained law.

The purpose of a government should not be to safeguard the interests of a particular individual, family, clan, party or community. It should aim at the enforcement of God's laws and safeguarding of the rights of the weak, administration of

justice, curbing of evils and obedience to God. People of doubtful character and the power-hungry will not qualify to be chosen to run the government. Only the God-fearing, able and talented ones would claim the right to administer the State. Monarchy and autocracy are foreign to the concept of Islam. The system of governance approved by Islam is consultative. The essential qualifications for any government post will be not only ability, but also a good moral character. The corrupt, dishonest and unscrupulous will face outright dismissal from the government offices. The crime having been proved, just punishment is to be given. The treasury and all other sources of wealth are public property and the government will have to take special precautions against pilferage, extravagance and the abuse of the national wealth. Strict economy will be observed in all money matters.

The judiciary will be totally independent of the executive. Nobody will be above the law. The judges will be men of strong character and integrity with a sound knowledge of the Islamic jurisprudence. In the administration of justice nobody's position or status will be taken into ac-

count. The law will treat everyone justly and with strict equality and neutrality. There will be no favours or concessions. There will be effective punishment for the offences once they are duly proved in a court of law, whoever be the offender. Justice will be free and speedy. There will be no room for the lawyers whose profession seems to be bailing out their clients through crafty legal manoeuvres, concocted evidence and twisting of the law. The evidence of the people of shady character will not be admissible. Giving false evidence is a heinous crime and horrid sin. It is the religious and moral obligation of every Muslim to give true evidence holding the fear of God above all considerations even if the evidence is to go against one's own self, his parents or his community.

The police will not be permitted to resort to cruel and oppressive methods. Dishonest, cruel and people of dubious character will not be employed in the police and prison services. The prisoners will be treated decently and humanely and the aim would be to reform them. No one will be placed under detention without due process of law. Every one shall have the freedom of thought and expression. The

press will be free but shall observe norms of morality. There shall be no room for such literature and such radio and television programmes as promote obscenity, immorality, enmity, mutual distrust and discord and spread un-Godliness.

Educational institutions and the entire media will be used to generate God-fearingness and good moral conduct and to reform the society on healthy lines. There will be no co-education nor will the free-mixing of males and females allowed otherwise. In addition to academic qualifications, piety will be the pre-requisite for the employment of the teachers. All non-Muslims in an Islamic State shall be accorded full protection to their life, property and honour and shall have full freedom to follow their religion without the slightest coercion. Their personal law and their places of worship will be protected. Their status, in the eyes of law, will be equal to Muslims and they will be equally entitled to the protection of law.

An Islamic State will be responsible for all these under the command of God and according to the teachings of His prophet.

THE END